

Message Text

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NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-15 TRSE-00 MBFR-03

SAJ-01 SS-15 AEC-11 IO-13 SCI-06 RSR-01 /126 W

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R 101047Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6787

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 11443

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, GW, NATO

SUBJECT: BUNDESWEHR GENERAL INSPECTOR ON RECENT
DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON

1. IN A RECENT TALK WITH EMBOFF, ADMIRAL ARMIN
ZIMMERMANN, BUNDESWEHR GENERAL INSPECTOR, REPEATED
ASSURANCES WE HAVE HEARD ELSEWHERE IN THE DEFENSE
MINISTRY THAT FOLLOWING MINISTER LEBER'S VISIT TO
WASHINGTON, GERMAN CONCERN ABOUT THE US/SOVIET
AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR HAS BEEN
PUT TO REST.

2. ZIMMERMANN, WHO PRIOR TO LEBER'S VISIT TO
WASHINGTON EXPRESSED SERIOUS MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE
AGREEMENT, TOLD US THAT SHORTLY AFTER HIS RETURN TO
BONN WITH LEBER, HE PREPARED A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO ALL
THE COMMANDERS OF ALL MAJOR UNITS OF THE GERMAN MILITARY
FORCES STATING THAT THE AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT
WHATSOEVER ON SUCH NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPTS AS FLEXIBLE
RESPONSE AND FORWARD DEFENSE. ZIMMERMANN REPEATED WHAT
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HE SAID EARLIER, THAT THE AGREEMENT HAD LED TO

WIDESPREAD UNCERTAINTY AMONG FRG MILITARY LEADERS ABOUT THE EFFECT THE AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE ON THE US NUCLEAR COMMITMENT TO NATO DEFENSE. MANY SENIOR BUNDESWEHR COMMANDERS HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE AGREEMENT REQUIRED US/SOVIET CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO USING NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE EVENT OF CONFLICT. ZIMMERMANN THOUGHT HIS PERSONAL MESSAGE TO THE SENIOR OFFICERS RESOLVED THEIR DOUBTS ON THIS SCORE AND THAT ANY REMAINING PROBLEMS WITH SENIOR OFFICERS' ATTITUDES ARE MINOR.

3. ZIMMERMANN ALSO SAID THE WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS SET ASIDE HIS FEAR THAT THE US WAS ABOUT TO SEEK BASIC CHANGES IN 14/3 STRATEGY. IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION, HE AGAIN STRESSED HIS VIEW THAT ANY RE-OPENING OF 14/3 COULD ENDANGER THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE ALLIANCE. THE WHOLE STRATEGIC DOCTRINE ISSUE, HE NOTED, WAS ONE WHICH TOUCHED THE MOST SENSITIVE NATIONAL INTERESTS AND RE-OPENING THESE MATTERS NOW, AT A TIME OF DECLINING PUBLIC CONCERN WITH DEFENSE ISSUES, COULD JEOPARDIZE THE STABILITY OF THE ALLIANCE. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES IN THE ALLIANCE HAVE BEEN, AND REMAIN, THE CONTROL AND EMPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THIS CENTRAL ISSUE HAS BEEN LARGELY SET ASIDE THANKS TO THE WORK OF THE NPG; POTENTIAL IN THE ALLIANCE FOR MISTRUST AND UNCERTAINTY HAS BEEN DRAINED OFF BY THE EFFICIENT NPG MECHANISM. WHAT WORRIED HIM WERE RECENT SUGGESTIONS (SUCH AS IN THE PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN POLICY REPORT) THAT NEW INSTITUTIONS WERE NEEDED TO DEAL WITH NUCLEAR FORCES, AND THAT OUR NUCLEAR DOCTRINES WERE INADEQUATE. HOWEVER, THE WASHINGTON VISIT HAD PROVED REASSURING

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AND HE WAS PERSONALLY SATISFIED THE US HAD NO INTENTION
TO SEEK REVISIONS OF EITHER THE ALLIANCE INSTITUTIONS
OR DOCTRINES CONCERNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

4. ZIMMERMANN ALSO OBSERVED THAT HE CONTINUED TO FIND
THE AGREEMENT DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE WITH HIS CONCEPTS
OF WESTERN DEFENSE NEEDS AND COOPERATION. HE SAID,
FOR INSTANCE, THAT HIS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE AGREEMENT
AS A WHOLE HAVE BEEN SETTLED, BUT HE WAS UNEASY ABOUT
THE INTERPRETATION THE SOVIETS MIGHT APPLY TO THE
AGREEMENT. HE ALSO INDICATED HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT
THE AGREEMENT'S POTENTIAL FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE TO
WESTERN EUROPEAN WILLINGNESS TO MAINTAIN SIZABLE ARMED
FORCES. FINALLY, HE IMPLIED A DISTRUST OF THE
AGREEMENT BECAUSE IT DID NOT CONTAIN A "MILITARY INPUT";
HERE HE NOTED HIS SURPRISE THAT THE US JOINT CHIEFS OF
STAFF ONLY LEARNED ABOUT IT A DAY OR TWO BEFORE IT WAS
ANNOUNCED.

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6. COMMENT: ADMIRAL ZIMMERMANN, WHO IS WELL-DISPOSED
TO THE US, ACCEPTS THE AGREEMENT BUT LIKE MANY OTHER
GERMANS HE DOUBTS THE USEFULNESS OF THE PACT, AND IS
DISTRUSTFUL ABOUT ITS POSSIBLE LONG-TERM IMPACT ON
THE ALLIANCE.
HILLENBRAND

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